My name is Megan Hansen from Newtown Connecticut. I am a sophomore psychology major. I was a recipient of a picture when I was a sophomore in high school. A nude picture of one of my classmates was sent by her ex-boyfriend as revenge to every student in school. She was devastated and considered transferring schools. When I received the picture, I felt embarrassed and ashamed for knowing that someone would do this to another person. I immediately deleted it from my phone but couldn't erase the memory of the picture nor of watching her cry in school and having to be picked up by her parents because she couldn't bear to be in the building. I needed to get a better understanding of why a nude picture of someone was taken in the first place, and why someone would do this to another. I have taken the responsibility of exploring the personal fable and imaginary audience theories to better understand why adolescents are engaging sexting behavior. Imaginary audience refers to "adolescents tendency to believe that others are always watching and evaluating them", while the personal fable, "refers to the belief that the self is unique, invulnerable, and omnipotent." According to research the journal Child Development, David Elkind states "Adolescents are thought to believe that, mistakenly, their own appearance and behavior are of as much concern to others as they are to themselves...and also to assume that others' evaluations of them match their self evaluations." Adolescents then must construct and react to an imaginary audience. Self-consciousness and conformity to a peer group in regards to appearance relate to the imaginary audience while isolation and risk-taking behavior are linked directly to the personal fable. An adolescent's transition into Piaget's formal operational stage of cognitive development is shaky and leads them to "fail to differentiate the contents of his or her thoughts from those of others." Conversely, while constructing this imaginary audience, that "differentiation error swings to the opposite extreme where the adolescent fails to realize the commonality of experiences and emotions among peers, and

instead considering him or herself unique and omnipotent", thus creating the personal fable.

"Adolescents become self conscious and concerned with what others think of them when they

themselves begin to question who they are, how they fit in, and what they will do with their

lives" and "the self-concerns and social demands of the identity development process may lead

adolescents to confuse their own concerns with the concerns of others." Thus the victim because

believes whatever others are telling them. Research shows that separation-individuation is the

main task of adolescence and that the imaginary audience and personal fable aid their separations

from their parents. "Adolescents become increasingly concerned with non familial relationships,

and begin to think about themselves in various social scenarios in which they are the focus", and

contributes to the destructive behavior of sexting.

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